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Editor's Note



Greg Trauthwein, Editor,
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I've been covering the maritime industry for 34+ years, and while some of the characters change, while the volume of the arguments ebb and flow, the two sides debating the pros and cons of the value of the Jones Act will seemingly never end. With the return of President Trump to the White House in 2025 came a renewed hope and vigor for the U.S. maritime sector. While the full impact of this 'maritime renaissance' could takes years or decades to fully materialize, the prevailing line of thought is that the ongoing Jones Act waiver – the longest since WWII – is squarely at odds with the notion of a stronger U.S. maritime industry and infrastructure. The Jones Act waiver of 2026, enacted by the Department of Homeland Security on March 17, 2026, is set to expire on November 15, 2026, and no one seems to know exactly which way it will go: Will it expire and end or be extended? While no one (at least no one talking to me!) seems to know for sure, it would stand to reason that with the U.S. mid-term elections in the rearview mirror, the waiver will expire. As **Jennifer Carpenter**, head of the American Waterways Operators, writes starting on page 21:

> *"It's ironic and unfortunate that this year has also brought a misguided assault on the Jones Act, the foundation of America's maritime strength and independence throughout the modern era. The tradeoff? America's maritime future for a political talking point and less than a penny a gallon in savings at the gas pump."*

Bob Kunkel, another regular contributor to our pages across out media, writes in the November 2026 edition of sister-publication *Maritime Reporter & Engineering News* that:

> *"A follow-on extension will result in a call for a moment of silence, signaling the possible loss of 90,000 American seafaring jobs, and adding thousands of lost employment opportunities in shipbuilding and port operations. All occurring during the year of "Maritime Dominance".*

In the same article Kunkel contends that equally troubling is another decision allowing sanctioned Russian diesel oil delivered into the US market, noting that the U.S. Treasury Department issuance of a temporary general license bypasses aspects of the 2022 Ending Importation of Russian Oil Act, and in his opinion, ignores national security.



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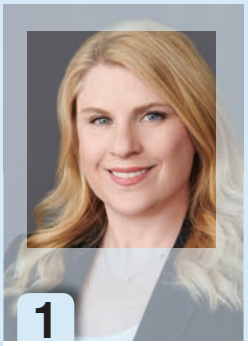
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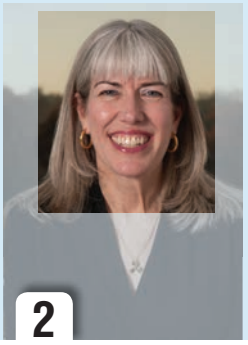


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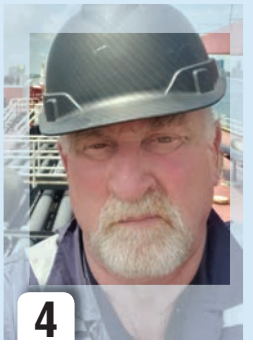
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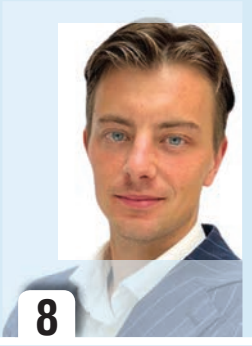


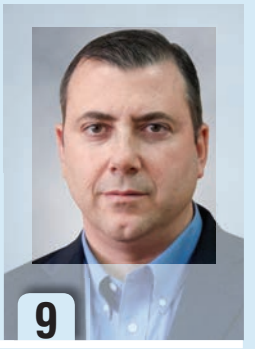












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"WELCOME TO A DYING INDUSTRY":

From a Dutch maritime family to America's Cup yacht design and the president of Martin & Ottaway, a 150-year-old engineering firm, ***Rik van Hemmen*** *has walked a unique path through the maritime industry. van Hemmen recently visited with* ***Maritime Matters: The MarineLink Podcast,*** *to share his views on everything from maritime engineering, technology, fuel, education and the future of shipping.*

By Greg Trauthwein

In 1988, a 28-year-old Rik van Hemmen attended a cocktail party at the Four Seasons in New York City, surrounded by senior shipping executives and shipowners. He had recently joined Martin & Ottaway, the maritime engineering and consulting company where his father, Hank van Hemmen, was a partner.

One of the industry veterans offered the young engineer a greeting he has never forgotten.

"Welcome to a dying industry."

Van Hemmen, never particularly inclined to accept conventional wisdom, had an answer.

"Yeah, but all you guys are old and you're going to be dead soon and then it will be all mine, or whatever is left." Nearly four decades later, the president of Martin & Ottaway can appreciate the humor in that exchange. The older generation has largely passed, but the maritime industry has done anything but disappear.

"The truth of it is that this industry didn't go away. It's just different," said van Hemmen.

While American deepsea shipping has unquestionably declined, maritime commerce has expanded, technology has advanced and the definition of what constitutes the maritime industry has grown considerably.

"I'm still a small player in a big industry," he said. "Today, the technology and the engineering is much more interesting than it was back in the 80s."

That perspective is informed by a career that has taken him through defense engineering, classification, America's Cup yacht design, marine casualties, technology development and the management of one of the industry's oldest engineering consultancies.

It also comes from a family history that explains why van Hemmen approaches maritime engineering as something considerably larger than designing ships.

All images courtesy Rik van Hemmen

"I'm a son of a son of a sailor"



Van Hemmen was born in the Netherlands in 1960, into a family in which maritime engineering was an established profession. His father and grandfather were ship engineers, although neither began his career as a business owner. Maritime was part of everyday life. As a schoolboy, he brought photos of enormous Dutch tugboats to show and tell. His father's work provided opportunities to visit ships and waterfront facilities. But on particularly acute memory has little to do with ships themselves. As a six-year-old, van Hemmen sat in the Lotus Formula One car driven by Jim Clark, which was being transported by the shipping company employing his father.

The experience left a lasting impression, but it did not settle his career ambitions.

Born at the beginning of the space age, van Hemmen was fascinated by aerospace engineering. He could readily imagine pursuing something other than maritime. His family's connection to the industry, however, extended back another generation, and the story of how his grandfather entered shipping is revealing.

His grandfather, Hendrik Fokko, was the eldest of 12 children. His father was a cigar maker, and the younger Hendrik initially trained as a blacksmith. Seeking better opportunities, he decided to apply to a school for railway engineers.

On the tram to the school, an older passenger asked where he was going. When Hendrik explained his plans, the stranger suggested he stay aboard for one more stop and apply to the marine engineering school instead. The money, the stranger explained, was better at sea.

He followed the advice and became a ship engineer.

For van Hemmen, the story illustrates something important: even in a country with the maritime heritage of the Netherlands, the connection between a young person and a maritime career can be remarkably tenuous, a resounding message today as the industry collectively seeks to attract and retain the next generation.

And in fact, van Hemmen's own route was hardly more direct.

The family moved to the United States in 1976 when van Hemmen was 16. Approaching high school graduation, he had made little effort to investigate college until a guidance counselor intervened.

Maritime academies were suggested, but van Hemmen was not yet an American citizen and could not attend under the admission rules then in place.

He began examining engineering programs and discovered Virginia Tech's aerospace and ocean engineering program. Stevens Institute of Technology was another possibility, particularly because of its involvement in America's Cup research.

Virginia Tech ultimately won out.

Van Hemmen studied aerospace and ocean engineering, a combination reflecting the shifting engineering priorities of the 1970s. With the space program and defense aerospace markets contracting, ocean engineering was being promoted as a new frontier. Deep sea mining, an industry still attempting to establish itself commercially today, was among the emerging opportunities. Financial necessity led van Hemmen into cooperative education, including work for a defense contractor on submarine warfare projects. He also spent time with the American Bureau of Shipping, a well-paying surveyor position in New York.

He took the job and bought a sailboat, but the office routine did not suit him. "I just did not like the job. It really made me miserable," he recalled.

On a whim, he applied to work in America's Cup yacht design. He got the job, accepted a substantial pay cut, sailed his boat to Newport and spent four years designing yachts.

By 1988, with a wife, child and mortgage, the econom-

Rik van Hemmen



Rik van Hemmen @ the shipwreck New Carissa salvage job in February 1999. "If things get strange, we get the call."

ics of yacht design had become less appealing.

Harry Ottaway, his father's business partner, suggested bringing him into Martin & Ottaway.

His father agreed, with one condition. "You don't work for me, you're going to work for Harry Ottaway." Van Hemmen joined the company that year, beginning a professional association that continues today.

"If things get strange, we get the call"

Martin & Ottaway recently celebrated its 150th anniversary, an occasion marked by the publication of *Let Me Be Frank: Martin & Ottaway, 150 Years.*

The title refers partly to three generations of company leadership named Francis Martin. It also reflects the book's approach to recounting the company's history, with the founding Francis Martin serving as a narrative voice, even beyond his death in 1921.

For van Hemmen, the title has a third meaning: an attempt to speak candidly about the maritime business.

That candor is evident in how he describes the firm.

"We're an engineering company that really is involved in wide ranging problem solving," he said.

"We don't just use calculations and drafting and stuff like that to solve the problem. We go deep into the maritime adventure in solving the problem."

The company works across engineering, insurance, legal disputes, finance, cargo operations and maritime economics. Its engineers are frequently brought into situations where something has failed, whether a vessel, a technology, a commercial arrangement or an operating procedure.

"The vast majority of problems that we have are failures," he said.

With approximately 10 engineers, the company handles about 200 projects annually. Van Hemmen estimates its client base at 600 to 700, although some clients may call only once in 20 years. "They generally know that if things gets strange and complicated, we get a call."

Maritime's Greatest Problem? Getting People in the Door

Ask van Hemmen about the industry's workforce shortage and the conversation quickly moves beyond wages, recruitment campaigns and maritime academies. His concern is more fundamental. "The problem we have today is the general public doesn't know how to enter it. It's too isolated."

Historically, maritime careers were visible. Ships lined

working waterfronts, and young people could encounter the industry simply by walking down a pier. Today's waterfronts are often recreational spaces, separated from the commercial operations that sustain the economy.

Someone watching a containership enter New York Harbor might be fascinated by the vessel, but have no idea how to turn that interest into a career.

Van Hemmen wants to change that through **SL7 Expo, an initiative proposing to convert a former SL7 containership, subsequently converted into a roll-on/roll-off vessel, into a major maritime exhibition and education center.** Make no mistake: the concept is not simply a museum of maritime history, rather it would emphasize contemporary careers, technology and opportunities, connecting visitors with the industry's many routes to employment. Van Hemmen envisions an attraction comparable in ambition to the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, complemented by practical waterfront programs.

The organizers submitted an unsolicited proposal to MARAD, but van Hemmen said the agency declined to support it on cost grounds. He cited an estimated $20 million annual requirement associated with maintaining the ship. His frustration is rooted in the contrast between spending on maritime infrastructure and the limited resources devoted to introducing people to the industry. "Maritime is a human enterprise," he said. "If you don't bring the humans in, you can spend all the money you want. It's just not going to happen."

He believes the industry should particularly reach communities where maritime careers are not traditionally considered. The opportunity is not simply to fill shipboard positions. It is to provide a route into skilled employment and the middle class.

But van Hemmen's argument goes further.

He believes maritime experience produces better decision makers, even among people who ultimately pursue other professions.

"Maritime is one of the best training grounds in the world for humans," said van Hemmen, citing its combination of independence, teamwork, responsibility and manageable risk makes.

"You need to put the kids in the real to make them powerful." Young people need opportunities to make mistakes, learn from them and develop confidence. They also need mentors willing to admit they do not always have the answers. "The best teachers say, 'I have no idea. Let's figure it out together.'"

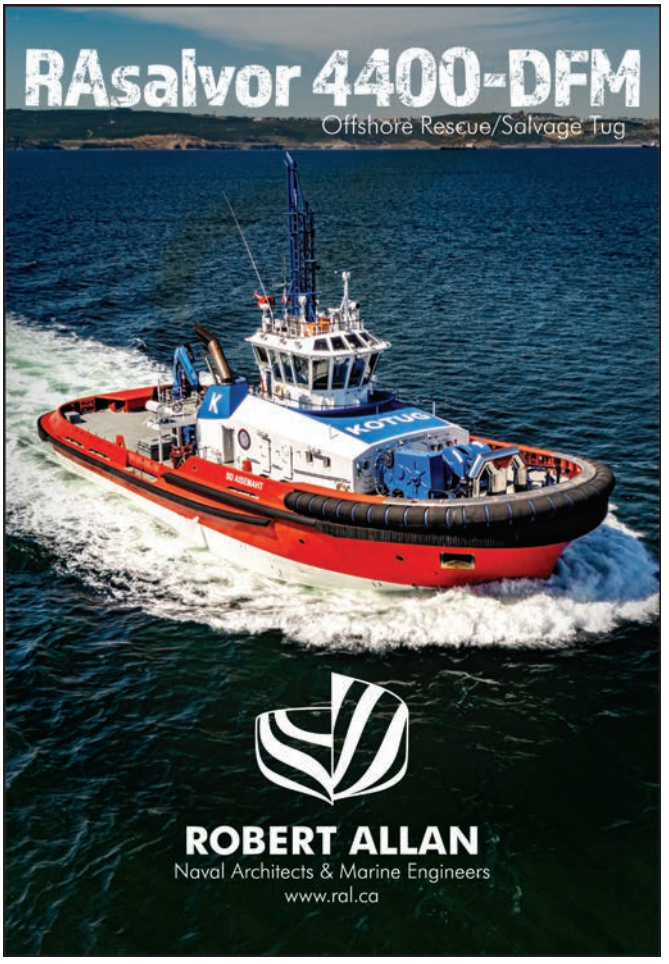
Fuel: The Path Ahead

When talk turns to maritime tech, Van Hemmen believes the adoption of heavy fuel oil ranks prominently. He argues that the industry's decision to place relatively unprocessed residual fuel aboard ships and require crews to clean it through onboard treatment systems represents an example of commercial incentives producing an inefficient overall result.

His daughter, who previously worked at Martin & Ottaway and now works for Ørsted, once questioned why the fuel was not cleaned to a consistent standard before delivery. He agreed.

"This is a classic case of a failure where economically something gets done, but when you look at the actual result of it, it's just plain stupid."

He is not arguing that heavy fuel oil could never have been used. His objection concerns how the system evolved and where the operational burden was placed. By contrast,



Insights
Rik van Hemmen


The Martin & Ottaway crew today.

he regards the International Maritime Organization as an example of successful international cooperation.

He credits IMO with helping establish broadly accepted rules that improved maritime safety and environmental performance, citing MARPOL and double hull tanker requirements.

"People like to make fun of United Nations, but IMO is part of United Nations. If you want to talk about success, it's incredible."

His larger frustration concerns the absence of consistent strategic direction, particularly in government programs. Recalling his defense engineering experience, van Hemmen describes promising technical projects that were abruptly canceled, leaving engineers to pack away their work. He sees a similar lack of sustained direction contributing to problems in U.S. Navy shipbuilding. "A government needs to set goals and let commerce achieve the goals and the winner makes money." Without clear objectives, he argues, even capable engineers and shipbuilders struggle to deliver economical results.

A Hybrid Future

Van Hemmen sees the transition to cleaner marine energy as one of the industry's most important coming decisions. He expects hybrid propulsion arrangements to become increasingly common, with designers balancing batteries, engines and fuel choices according to vessel requirements. But he also believes shipping would benefit from convergence around a broadly usable fuel.

His current preference is methanol. "I think methanol is the way to go."

He favors its handling and distribution characteristics, its potential use in combustion engines and fuel cells, and the relative ease of integrating it into existing fuel supply practices.

He is careful to distinguish a preference from a definitive prediction. "I'm not saying that is the actual answer, and I'm actually in a study group that is trying to figure out if I'm stupid or not."

He previously believed liquid hydrogen would emerge as a broadly transportable fuel and acknowledges that his thinking has changed. Hydrogen, he believes, will remain important, particularly as a means of converting surplus renewable energy into other fuels.

His principal concern is that shipowners may select fuels based on immediate price advantages without fully considering long-term operating and infrastructure consequences.

Ammonia is one example. Van Hemmen worries that its potential economic advantages could encourage widespread adoption before the industry fully accounts for its toxicity and handling requirements. The result, he fears, could resemble the historical experience with heavy fuel oil.

Autonomy & Maintenance

Van Hemmen expects autonomous technology to become an increasingly important part of maritime operations. He is less convinced that large oceangoing cargo ships will soon operate entirely without crews, as machinery requires maintenance during a voyage. "It makes much more sense to have maintenance on these ships with crews that maintain them as the ship is running than to do it on the dock."

He expects automation to reduce certain watchkeeping requirements and shift some navigation and planning functions ashore. But removing every person from a large commercial vessel creates operational and economic problems that cannot be solved through navigation software alone.

"So you probably have fewer watchstanders, you have reduced bridge crew, maybe navigational planning takes place ashore, stuff like that. But to see truly unmanned ships going, I don't quite see that yet."

He approaches artificial intelligence with similar pragmatism. Martin & Ottaway is actively experimenting with AI for research, engineering calculations and maintenance planning.

Van Hemmen describes using AI to calculate vessel deceleration in a marine casualty investigation. The system quickly produced the relevant equations and a useful technical explanation. But he emphasizes the need for professional judgment.

"A lot of times it's not," he said of AI-generated answers. "So that judgment still has to be there anyway." AI can shorten the route to an answer. It does not eliminate the engineer's responsibility to determine whether the answer is correct.

The Next 150 Years

For all his interest in emerging technology, van Hemmen returns repeatedly to people.

His father and grandfather remain his most important influences. Both, he recalls, were accomplished technical managers who gave younger colleagues the confidence to work independently. When those colleagues encountered problems, the response was not criticism.

It was an invitation to solve the problem together.

Other mentors included yacht designer Johan Valentijn and engineers who helped develop his technical expertise. Van Hemmen also draws inspiration from people outside maritime, including Admiral Wayne Meyer, Ted Turner, Pete Seeger, John Lewis and others who demonstrated independence, leadership or a willingness to challenge convention.

At Martin & Ottaway, he has tried to create a culture in which engineers with different backgrounds and viewpoints work together.

His most important management lesson is straightforward. "Don't hire somebody like yourself."

For a consulting firm regularly called upon to solve unusual problems, intellectual diversity is a practical necessity. "If everybody speaks the same tune, then you're going to get tunnel vision. And we fight tunnel vision every day."

His advice to someone considering maritime is to develop genuine expertise, demonstrate initiative and become comfortable working through unfamiliar problems.

The industry, after all, is not short of challenges.

And if van Hemmen's career demonstrates anything, it is that a maritime career rarely follows a predictable course. Nearly 40 years after being welcomed to a supposedly dying industry, he sees more opportunities, more complicated technology and more reasons for young people to become involved. The task now is to make sure they know those opportunities exist.



Learn more about the SL7Expo and its proposed role in inspiring maritime's next generation: https://sl7expo.org/





Subsea Vessel Market Faces Shifting Dynamics as Fleet Expansion Accelerates

© NickEyes/AdobeStock

We are entering in interesting period in the subsea vessel market, as contract backlog among the EPCs continue to rise to new all-time highs, existing long-term contracts are coming up for renewals, and a wave of newbuilds are closing in on delivery. On the top end, the market dynamics are changing as the Tier 1 EPC landscape is consolidating, while the fleet is expected to see a net growth of more than 20% in the coming two years.

By Aleksander Gussøy Paulsen, Market Analyst, Fearnley Offshore Supply

The still pending merger between Saipem and Subsea 7 is getting closer, with now only the European Commission's Phase II review outstanding at the time of writing. The European Commissions deadline was first 26th November 2026, then extended by 14 working days to the 16th December. Basis the latest official guiding indicates a close between late 2026 and early 2027 with February mentioned several times, where we can expect the initial period will be focused on post-merger integration and organizational optimization. Once the dust settles, the impact in the vessel market is likely to kick in, which we believe could lead to increased pricing power for the charterer.

With the market consolidation among the Tier 1 players, it is likely to see competitors with Tier 2 and 3 EPCI capabilities becoming more relevant among the end-clients, who always seek increased selection and a higher degree of competition. A good example of this is where DOF Subsea and DeepOcean would traditionally sit in the IMR and lighter subsea construction segments, but now might be the time to move towards expanding into field development capabilities.

In the field development space today, we expect Ocean Installer to be alternative for E&Ps after building an impressive track record on a variety of projects across mooring, SURF, and decommissioning. Over the summer, they received a contract covering SURF and pre-commission at the Bacalhau field from Equinor in Brazil, with expected offshore operations next year, which marks the company's first entry to the country. While likely not directly tied to the competitive situation, it is an interesting development showcasing a new market participant in the most active region for floating production capacity in the years to come.



Agogo FPSO at Walvis Bay, Namibia

© Yinson Production

Subsea EPCs Secure New Contracts Across Key Offshore Markets

Among the Tier 1 EPCs, the contract intake in August and September have been flattish, yet showcasing intake across familiar regions. Turkish Petroleum awarded Subsea7 an extension covering towing, mooring-line installation and connection work for the Sakarya Phase 3 floating production unit in the Turkish Black Sea, with commissioning activities scheduled for 2028. The award is classified as sizeable, implying a contract value of USD 50 and 150 million.

In the US Gulf, LLOG Exploration awarded Subsea7 a contract for the fabrication, transportation and installation of a 29 km steel catenary riser and pipe-in-pipe system, together with umbilical and subsea-controls installation, in approximately 1,300 m water depth. Offshore work is expected to start in 2028 and the value is estimated between USD 50 and 150 million.

Saipem, who have been engaged with the current work on the Sakarya Phase 2 project, have now received an award from GOE Petrol Sanayi for an approximately eight-month contract for commissioning services on the Osman Gazi floating production unit, which will serve the gas field in the Turkish Black Sea.

In Africa, Saipem and Jan De Nul have formed a consortium and signed an LOI with ExxonMobil Mozambique for the Rovuma LNG Phase 1. The LOI covers preliminary engineering, procurement and technical services covering offshore upstream facilities that will connect 18 subsea wells to the onshore LNG plant through subsea pipelines and manifolds. The initial scope is valued at approximately EUR 11 million and the full EPCI award remains subject to FID and regulatory approvals.

Saipem also secured an EPCI contract from Azule Energy for the West Hub Tails project offshore Angola. The scope covers approximately 62 km of subsea flowlines, risers and umbilicals tied back to the Agogo FPSO, located around 180 km offshore in water depths of up to 1,750 metres. The contract is valued at approximately USD 350 million and is expected to run for around 2.5 years.

Azule Energy awarded TechnipFMC a contract to design and manufacture flexible flowlines, risers and associated equipment to tie production from the West Hub development back to the Agogo FPSO in Block 15/06, offshore Angola. The award is classified as significant, indicating a contract value of between USD 75 million and USD 250 million.

In Malaysia, Petronas awarded TechnipFMC an integrated EPCI contract covering the full subsea scope of the Limbayong deepwater greenfield development. The project will utilise TechnipFMC's Subsea 2.0 configure-to-order platform, and the award is classified as significant, implying a contract value of between USD 75 million and 250 million.



Ocean Energy Support Vessel (OESV) for Østensjø Rederi built by GONDAN Shipbuilders

On the vessel chartering side, we have seen a relatively slow end of summer with few high profile new long-term contracts awarded. Reach Subsea recently exercised a one-year option for the "Deep Cygnus" from Havila Subsea & Renewables, which will keep her firm towards March 2028.

In the higher end segment, DOF Group has received a letter of intent for a contract valued at between USD 50 million and 100 million that would secure work for one of it's I-class vessels in the first half of 2028. As such, the contract visibility in the 400-ton segment have improved significantly over the last year.

On the corporate side, DeepOcean and TFKable Group plan to establish an integrated EPCI offering for offshore-wind inter-array cables, combining cable manufacturing with survey, engineering, transport, trenching, installation and protection. The multi-year programme includes plans for a dedicated newbuild cable-laying vessel. No investment value nor delivery date was disclosed.

Similarly in West Arica, diving specialist Mermaid Maritime and Marine Platforms of Nigeria have formed Mermaid Subsea Services, owned 49% by Mermaid and 51% by Marine Platforms, to pursue subsea work for TotalEnergies and other Nigerian operators while meeting local-content requirements. The venture targets subsea EPCI, ROV support, well services and vessel chartering.

In Brazil, Petrobras awarded the 2008-built CSV "Normand Valiant" a two-year contract for accommodation support to production activities on the Brazilian continental shelf. The vessel, equipped with a walk-to-work gangway and capacity for 120 people onboard, is expected to start in the fourth quarter of 2026 almost in direct continuation of its current employment and less its scheduled class renewal. Gross contract value is approximately USD 62 million.

Newbuild Wave Puts Pressure on Vessel Charter Rates

Many EPCs have been conservative in adding new long-term tonnage in recent months, leading to low volumes of new reported fixtures. Multiple EPCs have optional periods that were excised at lower rates than owners' current expectations, with several vessels reaching option expiry next year. As the total orderbook across 150 to 400-ton crane vessels now total roughly 35 vessels, we see a market

with charterers will have ample choice from existing tonnage and newbuilds.

As an example, Østensjø Rederi has now launched the 120-meter Ocean Energy Support Vessel built at Gondan in Spain, with delivery scheduled for late 2027 following outfitting and sea trials. The vessel is designed for a combination of walk-to-work and CSOV support, offshore construction, subsea installation, ROV work, as well as cable laying and repair, with 1,400 m² deck space and accommodation for 173 people onboard. While the contract value has not been publicly disclosed, a European built vessel with this level of specifications comes at a premium.

Other owners with uncommitted 250-tonne units scheduled for delivery between Q4 2026 and Q2 2027 include Rem Offshore, Island Offshore and Sea1. Given the current scarcity of active long-term requirements from the major EPCs, we expect owners to show greater commercial flexibility to secure contract coverage ahead of delivery. This trend is already evident in the 150- and 250-tonne segments, where time-charter rates for the latest long-term fixtures have softened from the peaks recorded in 2024 and 2025. We also expect an increasingly notable rate differential between owners capable of delivering integrated scopes, including ROV and engineering services, and those providing vessel capacity alone.

These market dynamics could shift relatively quickly in owners' favour, as only a limited number of long-term requirements would be needed to absorb a meaningful share of the speculative orderbook. Given the record EPC backlog and the underlying pipeline of subsea opportunities, we would not be surprised to see vessel contracting activity increase over the medium term. However, while active requirements remain limited and the fleet continues to expand, we expect near-term upside in charter rates to remain constrained.





Looking Beyond the Benefit-to-Cost Ratio: Why America's Inland Waterways Deserve a Broader Measure of Value

By Jen Armstrong, Waterways Council, Inc. Vice President, Government Relations

Every year, the President's budget proposes investments in infrastructure projects across the country. For navigation projects on America's inland waterways, one of the most important factors influencing whether a lock and dam modernization project advances in the annual budget process is its benefit-to-cost ratio (BCR).

On its surface, the concept sounds simple and sensible. A project's benefits should exceed its costs. The higher the ratio, the stronger the justification for federal investment.

But when it comes to inland waterways infrastructure, the formula used by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers captures only a fraction of the value these projects provide to the Nation. As a result, some projects that are critically important to the economy, national security, and energy supply may appear less beneficial on paper than they truly are in practice.

What is a Benefit-to-Cost Ratio?

The Corps calculates a BCR by comparing the expected economic benefits of a project to the cost of constructing it. For inland navigation projects, the quantified benefits are limited to cost savings- an estimate of how much money shippers will save by moving freight by barge versus another mode of transportation like truck or rail which automatically assumes there is capacity to accommodate the volumes currently transported by barge.

The inland waterways system moves hundreds of millions of tons of cargo annually, including grain, fertilizer, coal, petroleum products, aggregates, chemicals, and other bulk commodities. Even small improvements in efficiency can generate significant economic benefits. The problem is not what the BCR measures; the problem is what it does not measure.



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A System Providing Far More Than Transportation Savings

America's inland waterways network is much more than a freight transportation system. It is a foundational piece of national infrastructure that supports numerous public benefits extending well beyond shipper cost savings.

Locks and dams help maintain a reliable navigation channel that enables U.S. agricultural exports to reach global markets competitively. A disruption at a major lock can ripple through supply chains, increase transportation costs, and weaken the international competitiveness of American farmers and manufacturers.

The system is also essential to energy security. Inland waterways transport vast quantities of petroleum products, coal, chemicals, and components used throughout the Nation's energy sector. Maintaining reliable movement of these commodities helps ensure affordable and dependable energy supplies for homes, businesses, and industries.

Moreover, inland waterways provide critical resilience and redundancy during disruptions to other transportation networks. When highways become congested, rail service is constrained, or national disasters affect transportation infrastructure, the option rivers provide is even more crucial.

Yet these broader economic and strategic benefits generally do not appear in traditional navigation BCR calculations.

The National Security Dimension

Perhaps the most significant omission is national security. The Department of Defense [War] and the Nation's industrial base depends on reliable transportation networks capable of moving large volumes of critical materials. America's waterways support shipyards, energy facilities, steel production, agricultural output, and manufacturing operations that contribute directly or indirectly to national defense readiness.

The inland waterways system itself can be viewed as strategic infrastructure. Just as the Nation invests in highways, ports, airports, and military facilities because they serve broader national objectives, locks and dams support capabilities that may become especially important during emergencies or conflicts.

A lock modernization project may not generate enough transportation cost savings alone to produce a particularly high BCR. However, if that same project strengthens supply chain resilience, supports defense-related industries, and provides transportation redundancy during crises, its actual value to the Nation is substantially greater than the ratio suggests.

Global Competitiveness Matters

The United States competes in a global market where transportation efficiency directly affects economic success.

Many of America's major trading competitors continue investing heavily in transportation infrastructure to lower logistics costs and improve export performance. Aging inland waterways infrastructure places the United States at a disadvantage when breakdowns and delays increase transportation costs for domestic producers.

The average age of many locks on the inland waterways system exceeds their original design life and unexpected outages become increasingly likely as infrastructure ages. When key locks fail, the consequences extend far beyond local communities. Exporters lose reliability, manufacturers face higher costs, and international customers may seek alternative suppliers.

These impacts affect national economic competitiveness, but they are not fully reflected in traditional project economics.

Toward a More Comprehensive Evaluation Framework

None of this suggests that benefit-to-cost analysis should be abandoned. Fiscal discipline and economic accountability remain essential for responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. However, major infrastructure investments should be evaluated using a framework that recognizes both economic efficiency and strategic national interests.

America's inland waterways are one of the Nation's greatest competitive advantages. They move freight safely, efficiently, and with lower emissions than most transportation alternatives. More importantly, they support food security, energy security, economic growth, military readiness, and the resilience of domestic supply chains.

If decision makers continue focusing solely on what can be easily measured, they risk undervaluing infrastructure that is vital to the Nation's future.

America's Maritime Future is Worth More Than a Penny at the Pump

By Jennifer Carpenter, President & CEO of The American Waterways Operators

We are approaching the end of America's 250th birthday year, a year of reflecting on the vital contributions of American maritime to building and strengthening our nation. Against this backdrop, it's ironic and unfortunate that this year has also brought a misguided assault on the Jones Act, the foundation of America's maritime strength and independence throughout the modern era. The tradeoff? America's maritime future for a political talking point and less than a penny a gallon in savings at the gas pump.

In March, shortly after the initiation of hostilities in Iran, the Trump Administration announced a broad waiver of the Jones Act under 46 U.S. Code Section 501(a), which allows the law to be waived when "necessary in the interest of national defense to address an immediate adverse impact on military operations." At the same time, the Administration signaled that the real purpose of the waiver was to bring down domestic gas prices, which had risen substantially in the wake of disruption to the flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz. Neither justification has held up. The waiver has not been used to address a national defense emergency. The blanket waiver in place from March to August covered over 600 commodities, with waiver shipments consisting mainly of commercial fuels and crude oil and not military-grade fuels. Since the waiver mechanics shifted in August from broad blanket application to case-by-case review based on availability of U.S. vessels, U.S. Maritime Administration data has shown that most requests to move cargo under the waiver have been for ordinary commercial voyages with no clear nexus to emergency or military needs.

A recent MARAD Vessel Availability Request highlights this reality starkly: On October 26, MARAD notified the American maritime industry of a shipper's request to determine vessel availability to move one of five potential cargoes from Louisiana and/or Texas to 10 potential U.S. destinations, each also separated by the phrase "and/or." Clearly, this was a case of commercial arbitrage, and not an emergency – much less a national defense emergency – anywhere.

Appropriately, the waiver request was denied. To be clear: the problem is not MARAD, which has performed admirably, with personnel standing watch 24/7 since August to process vessel availability requests. The problem is the waiver itself, which allows shippers and traders to engage in fishing expeditions that waste taxpayer dollars and chill domestic maritime investment.

Meanwhile, Americans filling up their vehicles can see plainly that waiving the Jones Act has had no meaningful impact on the price at the pump. This is unsurprising, as the price of gas is determined by factors including the



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global price of oil (which rises when key transit points like the Strait of Hormuz are choked off), refining costs, and taxes, while the domestic marine transport of fuel accounts for less than a penny a gallon.

The Jones Act waiver has not provided relief from the problems it was pitched as solving. What it has provided is a talking point for politicians eager to tell the American public in a volatile election year that they left no stone unturned, no lever unpulled, in trying to address the challenge of rising energy costs, even if this particular "solution" hasn't made a dent.

The price of this talking point is dangerously high.

The political Jones Act waiver has enabled foreign vessels with foreign crews, answerable to foreign governments, to engage in U.S. domestic commerce, something American law does not allow for domestic trucking, rail transport, or air travel. Displacing American vessels and mariners on our domestic waterways creates dependence on foreign operators to keep our nation's supply chain moving, while exacerbating national security risks as even Chinese and Russian vessels and crews take advantage of the opportunity to move our domestic cargo.

And in stark contrast to President Trump's pledge to restore American maritime dominance, the waiver is doing serious harm to the American maritime industry.

Under the waiver, foreign carriers are not only displacing American vessels and mariners on domestic routes, but – **as Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-CA)**, Ranking Member on the House Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee has observed – are doing so seemingly without oversight to ensure their compliance with U.S. tax, labor, safety, security, and environmental laws. This disparity creates a major comparative disadvantage for American companies playing by the rules and following U.S. law.

While the Jones Act waiver puts American companies at risk today by opening domestic voyages to foreign operators unburdened by compliance with U.S. laws, it also threatens the long-term strength and viability of America's maritime industrial base. American vessel owners and shipyards cannot prudently invest capital in expanding their fleets and facilities if Jones Act waivers become a workaround norm for routine commerce rather than the rare, emergency exception contemplated by law. And the next generation of American mariners and shipyard workers critical to our nation's economy and security will not invest their time and talent in pursuing maritime careers if their jobs can be outsourced to foreign workers.

A strong and resilient American maritime industry has been vital to America's independence and global leadership for the past 250 years. We shouldn't sacrifice that legacy for a political talking point or a penny or less at the gas pump. It's time to end the political Jones Act waiver and put Americans, and America's maritime future, first.



Insider Insights

DCA

Modernizing Dredging Procurement

Building on U.S. Capacity and Competition

By William P. Doyle, CEO, Dredging Contractors of America

America's ports and waterways depend on a strong partnership between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the domestic dredging industry. That partnership supports commercial navigation, military readiness, energy exports, coastal protection, and the movement of goods throughout the country.

The Dredging Contractors of America (DCA) supports the Corps' goals of improving project delivery, coordinating schedules, reducing unnecessary costs, and maintaining reliable navigation channels.

As the Corps develops its Dredging Evolution for Enterprise Production (DEEP) initiative and proposed Enterprise Dredging Delivery Center (EDDC), decisions about project groupings, competition, and contractor participation will shape the American dredging industrial base for years.

DCA has addressed these issues with Corps leadership through meetings and written comments. Our recommendations seek to make modernization successful while preserving the companies, equipment, skilled workers, and competitive markets that make the navigation mission possible.

A Capable, Expanding Dredging Fleet

America's domestic dredging industry has a capable, diverse, and expanding fleet. Making full use of that capacity requires coordinated project schedules, appropriate work windows, and procurement strategies that preserve competition. American dredging companies have undertaken a multiyear recapitalization program of approximately $3 billion in new dredges, supporting vessels, and associated equipment. These investments span hopper, cutter-suction, and mechanical dredging capabilities and support American shipyards, mariners, and skilled trades.

New vessels are adding capacity and improving production, fuel efficiency, safety, and environmental performance. Over the past year alone, Curtin Maritime's DB Catalina, a hybrid-powered clamshell dredge, and Manson Construction's Frederick Paup, the largest self-propelled hopper dredge ever built in the United States, have entered service. The Dutra Group is continuing that investment with the Adele, a new 10,464-cubic-yard trailing suction hopper dredge under construction at Eastern Shipbuilding Group in Florida.

The relevant procurement question is whether suitable equipment can reach a particular project within its required operating period. That depends on dredge type, material, channel dimensions, placement requirements, environmental restrictions, mobilization, and competing schedules.

Narrow work windows or overlapping procurement schedules can create project-specific availability problems even when capable equipment exists. Those conditions should be examined on their own facts rather than treated as evidence of a nationwide vessel-capacity shortage.

Expand Productive Workdays, Improve Existing Practices

The Corps should begin with an enterprise-wide review of how to expand the number of days available for dredging. In some districts, guidelines and recommendations have effectively become mandatory work windows, even where restrictions are not required by statute or regulation. It's regulation creep that negatively impacts the navigation mission and should be scrapped as part the Administration's aim to reduce regulatory burdens.

DCA supports reviewing the legal and scientific basis for these restrictions. Legitimate environmental protections should remain effective, while restrictions unsupported by current project-specific evidence should be reconsidered.

When multiple projects must be performed during the same narrow period, schedules become compressed. Expanding appropriate work periods would improve fleet utilization, reduce scheduling pressure, and allow more dredging to be completed.

Other practical improvements include accurate quantity estimates, current surveys, appropriate paid overdepth, timely processing of surveys and payment quantities, and consistent administration of safety requirements.

Cross-district coordination can also improve responsive-

ness. Where contract requirements permit, temporarily releasing equipment that is ahead of schedule could help address urgent shoaling elsewhere. These measures directly affect production and cost and deserve attention alongside procurement reform.

Administrative Savings v. Dredging Savings

The dredging industry supports reducing unnecessary government paperwork and making better use of Corps personnel. However, savings within government administration and savings in the actual performance of dredging are separate outcomes. Each should be measured.

Issuing fewer solicitations or administering fewer contracts may reduce internal workload. The Corps should explain whether those changes reduce expenditures, free personnel for other responsibilities, or shorten procurement timelines. Those benefits do not, by themselves, establish that dredging will cost less or that more material will be removed from federal navigation channels.

Dredging costs depend on equipment, crews, fuel, material characteristics, placement requirements, mobilization, work windows, and project conditions. Competition among qualified contractors also helps determine the price the government pays.

A larger procurement package could reduce administrative effort while increasing dredging prices if fewer companies can compete directly or bonding requirements exclude otherwise capable contractors. Carefully coordinated, compatible projects may instead reduce mobilization costs and improve equipment utilization.

The Corps should evaluate these effects separately, identify the source of any claimed savings, and compare equivalent dredging requirements and navigation outcomes. Administrative simplification should strengthen the competitive delivery of dredging services.

Competition Delivers Taxpayer Value

The annual U.S. Dredging Report prepared by Michael Gerhardt, together with DCA's published assessments, documents a highly competitive domestic industry delivering substantial taxpayer value.

The FY2024 report identified 56 companies receiving Corps dredging awards, including 20 large businesses and 36 small businesses. Of 136 projects analyzed, 88 were awarded below the government estimate and 123, approximately 90 percent, below the Government Estimated Awardable Range, or GEAR. DCA's published assessment reported nearly $829 million



in estimated taxpayer savings. The FY2025 results reinforced that record. Unrestricted projects attracted an average of three bidders. DCA's assessment reported $773 million in savings, with 63 percent of projects awarded below the government estimate and 91 percent below GEAR.

These reported savings compare industry bids and awards with government estimating benchmarks. They provide an important baseline for evaluating procurement changes. Modernization should preserve the direct competition that has helped produce these results while generating additional efficiencies.

Continuity Through Leadership Transitions

Since DEEP was introduced at the National Dredge Meeting in June 2026, leadership responsibilities have changed at Army Civil Works and Corps headquarters. Adam Telle, who served as Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works when the initiative began, is now Acting Secretary of the Army. D. Lee Forsgren is now performing the duties of Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. At Corps headquarters, Brigadier General Geoffrey R. Van Epps is serving in an acting capacity in the civil works and emergency operations leadership role that is held by Major General Jason E. Kelly. MG Kelly is on a temporary assignment.

DCA appreciates the responsibilities these leaders have assumed and looks forward to continuing a constructive partnership. As this initiative moves through these transitions, continuity in reviewing industry comments, outstanding questions, and proposed alternatives is important. The acquisition strategies should reflect the full record of engagement developed since June.

Coordinate Compatible Projects and Preserve Competition

Private industry recognizes that properly matched project groupings can improve scheduling and reduce repeated mobilization and demobilization costs. Earlier visibility into upcoming work helps companies plan vessel deployments, retain crews, schedule maintenance, and evaluate investment.

The Corps has taken constructive steps by publishing proposed evaluation criteria, revising certain project groupings, and separating a portion of the Texas work into a proposed small-business set-aside. These changes demonstrate the value of continued engagement.

Project groupings must also reflect how dredging is performed. Hopper, cutter-suction, and mechanical dredges provide distinct capabilities. A project described broadly as hopper dredging may require pipelines, boosters, mechanical equipment, beach crews, or other specialized capabilities.

The Corps should identify the reaches, quantities, placement requirements, and activities intended for each equipment type. It should explain whether a particular dredge type is required or whether alternative methods can satisfy the project's needs.

Acquisition planning should include cutter-suction and mechanical dredging companies whenever their capabilities are implicated. Work traditionally performed by clamshell dredges should remain clearly identified and accessible to qualified mechanical dredging companies.

DCA recommends smaller groupings of two or three compatible projects where coordinated procurement offers a demonstrable benefit. These groupings would allow the Corps to test efficiencies while preserving opportunities for qualified companies to compete directly as prime contractors.

When recurring projects are consolidated under one prime, other companies may become dependent on a competitor for access to work they previously pursued independently. The Corps should weigh administrative efficiencies against the potential loss of direct competition and the bonding barriers created by larger packages.

Use a Measurable Pilot

A pilot should be appropriately sized to test a concept, identify problems, and measure results before broader implementation.

Evaluation should compare the pilot with established procurement methods, considering total cost, dredged quantities, channel availability, mobilization, contractor participation, and small-business prime opportunities. Cost comparisons should account for differences in material, depth, placement distance, environmental requirements, and the scope delivered.

The Corps should publish implementation guidance explaining the acquisition process, evaluation criteria, contractor responsibilities, and measures of success. Solicitation provisions should be tailored to maintenance dredging.

A contingency procurement plan is also essential. If a pilot is delayed, protested, revised, or cancelled, the Corps must retain a practical means of procuring maintenance work without allowing channel conditions to deteriorate.

DCA stands ready to work with Corps leadership to advance practical procurement improvements. Success should be measured by reliable navigation, more productive dredging days, and demonstrated taxpayer value. By building on the capacity and competition already present in the American dredging industry, the Corps can improve delivery while sustaining the companies, skilled workers, and private investment essential to the nation's maritime future.



Maritime Partner's Marauder

INNOVATION GOES TO WORK ON THE WATER

*From powerful Mississippi River towboats to electric cargo barges in Vietnam, **Marine News** examines a dozen innovative vessels whose design and build reflect the operational demands of working the world's inland & coastal waterways.*

The diversity of the US workboat market is evident in the vessels entering service in 2026. While boat owners continue to invest in conventional towing and harbor operations, newbuild programs are also addressing emerging requirements in offshore energy, naval support and specialized marine construction. Across these sectors, vessel designs are being shaped by the need for greater efficiency, reliability and flexibility, with propulsion arrangements, deck layouts and onboard systems tailored to increasingly specific operating profiles.

Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Corporation's Acadia is a significant departure from the company's traditional dredging business. Delivered by Hanwha Philly Shipyard in Philadelphia, the Jones Act-compliant subsea rock installation vessel was built to transport and precisely place rock on the seabed, protecting offshore wind turbine foundations, cables and other subsea infrastructure. The vessel is powered by four Wabtec engines, comprising two 8L250MDC and two 12V250MDC units. Its specialized rock placement capability allows Great Lakes to participate in offshore energy construction projects that require accurate installation of protective material in challenging marine environments.

Following delivery, Acadia mobilized for Equinor's Empire Wind 1 project offshore New York, with subsequent work planned at Ørsted's Sunrise Wind project. The vessel is then scheduled to cross the Atlantic for a European offshore wind assignment, providing employment extending through much of 2027.

In Alabama, Master Boat Builders delivered two distinctly different tug designs serving the American towing market. **The 88-foot Marauder delivered to Maritime**



CMA CGM's Electra

Partners was built at the company's Coden shipyard. It is the first vessel in an eight-tug construction program. Classified as an A1 Escort Tug and Towing Vessel, it incorporates an automated machinery system, Underwater Inspection in Lieu of Drydocking certification and FFV1 firefighting capability. It also carries a Low Emissions Vessel designation. Those features support the tug's intended combination of harbor towing, escort and marine support assignments. Automated machinery monitoring assists vessel operations, while the underwater inspection notation provides an alternative to conventional drydocking for certain inspection requirements. Seven additional vessels in the program are scheduled to follow.

Master Boat Builders also **delivered Saturn to Suderman & Young Towing Company,** the first of four Rapport 3000 escort tugs. At 98 feet long with a molded beam of 43 feet, Saturn is considerably broader than many conventional harbor tugs of similar length. Its two main engines develop a combined 7,000 hp, providing more than 90 metric tons of bollard pull and a maximum speed of approximately 13 knots.

The tug accommodates six crew members and carries 44,342 gallons of fuel oil. With gross tonnage below 300 GRT, the vessel combines substantial towing power with the operational flexibility required for port assignments and ship escort work.

Another high-powered harbor tug joined the **McAllister Towing fleet with the delivery of Mary McAllister from Washburn & Doughty Associates in Maine.**

The vessel is the sixth in a seven-tug series of ABS-classed tractor tugs designed for 84 metric tons of bollard pull. Its Caterpillar Tier IV engines produce a combined 6,770 hp, while the vessel's classification includes towing, automated machinery, escort, firefighting and low-emissions notations.

Firefighting equipment includes pumps and monitors capable of delivering 12,000 gallons of water and foam per minute, giving the tug an emergency response capability beyond its routine ship-assist duties.

Following delivery, Mary McAllister was scheduled to join sister tug Isabel in Baltimore before proceeding to its permanent homeport at Port Everglades, Florida.

On the Mississippi River, horsepower remains central to the economics of moving large barge tows. **Marquette Transportation Company's M/V John Paul Eckstein** illustrates the scale of modern linehaul towboat construction.

Built by C&C Marine and Repair in Belle Chasse, Louisiana, and designed by CT Marine, the steel-hulled vessel measures 189 feet long and 50 feet wide, with a molded depth of 12 feet. Two Caterpillar diesel engines provide a combined 10,000 hp, driving 122-inch propellers.

Designed for sustained operations between St. Louis and New Orleans, the towboat accommodates 12 people in 10 staterooms. The arrangement supports the extended crew rotations associated with long-distance inland towing.

Christened in New Orleans on January 10, 2026, the vessel honors Marquette Executive Chairman John Paul Eckstein, who previously served as president and CEO for three decades.

The **U.S. Navy's** next generation of towing and salvage vessels is represented by the future **USNS Solomon Atkinson** (**T-ATS 12**), christened at Austal USA's Mobile, Alabama, shipyard.

The second of three T-ATS vessels under construction at Austal, Solomon Atkinson belongs to the Navajo class, which combines capabilities previously provided by the Navy's fleet ocean tugs and rescue and salvage ships.

The ocean-going vessel is designed to tow Navy ships, conduct salvage and rescue operations, and support oil spill response, humanitarian assistance and wide-area



GLDD's Acadia

search missions.

Approximately 6,000 square feet of working deck space provides room for equipment and mission-specific systems. Modular payload arrangements, flexible interfaces and onboard accommodation capacity are intended to allow the vessel to adapt to different assignments without extensive modification.

The ship is named for Chief Warrant Officer 4 Solomon Atkinson, a pioneering Navy SEAL and member of Alaska's Metlakatla Indian Community.

Returning to the inland waterways, C**&C Marine and Repair delivered the M/V Al Sloss to Canal Barge Company,** the first of four new towboats for the New Orleans operator.

The 87- x 34-ft. vessel develops 2,600 hp from two Mitsubishi S12-R main engines supplied by Laborde Products. Reintjes WAF 665 reduction gears, supplied by Karl Senner, transmit power to the propulsion system, while two FPT generator sets provide electrical power.

Designed by C&C Marine's engineering team and completed in approximately six months, Al Sloss incorporates steering, alarm and monitoring systems from Eagle Control Systems.

The wheelhouse features Furuno radars, AIS, a satellite compass, bridge alarms and Standard Horizon VHF communications equipment supplied through GMENI Marine Electronics and Supply. Deck equipment includes two Wintech 40-ton winches, a 5-ton vertical capstan and two Carlisle & Finch 1,000-watt searchlights. Eight berths and a soft-core joiner system provide accommodation for the crew.

Together, these seven vessels illustrate the breadth of American workboat construction, from specialized offshore installation and naval support to the everyday requirements of moving cargo and assisting ships in port.

Outside the United States, the same emphasis on matching vessel design to operating requirements is producing a diverse range of workboats, including battery-powered inland cargo vessels, shallow-draft passenger craft and specialized offshore support equipment.

In Vietnam, CMA CGM, Nike and port operator Gemadept have introduced a fully electric container barge service connecting Ho Chi Minh City with the Gemalink deep-sea terminal at Cai Mep.

The CMA CGM Electra operates on a 180-km round trip, moving Nike cargo between an inland collection point and the international container terminal.

Developed by CMA CGM's New Build and R&D teams, the vessel uses battery technology supplied by CATL. Its batteries can be recharged in approximately four hours using certified renewable electricity, supported by dedicated charging infrastructure and a solar farm at Gemalink.

The service is designed to handle more than 50,000 TEU annually, with the partners estimating that shifting cargo from road transportation to the electric barge will avoid approximately 778 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year.

The arrangement demonstrates the potential of battery propulsion where vessels operate predictable routes and have reliable access to charging facilities.

In Australia, **Incat Crowther designed Spirit of Mulgumpin for The Tour Collective's** See Moreton tourism operation in Queensland's Moreton Bay Marine Park.

The 21.99-meter aluminum vessel carries up to 190 passengers and five crew members. With a 9-meter beam and a draft of just 1.2 meters, it is configured for shallow-water tourism operations, including beach access and snorkeling excursions.

Two MAN D2862 LE425 engines, each rated at 749 kW, provide a service speed of 25 knots and maximum



Canal Barge's Al Sloss

speed of 28 knots.

A stern swimming platform facilitates passenger access to the water, while a customized bow gangway accommodates beach landings. The main deck seats 105 passengers and includes a central bar, refrigeration facilities and three bathrooms. The mid deck accommodates another 28 passengers in lounge seating, with additional outdoor seating for 40 passengers.

Japan's NYK Group has taken another approach to specialized passenger transport with Alfonsino Arrow, a crew transfer vessel launched at Kosaba Shipbuilding in Kamaishi. The vessel is intended to transport technicians and other personnel supporting offshore wind construction and maintenance in Japanese waters.

It is the first crew transfer vessel NYK has ordered from a Japanese shipyard. The design was adapted from drawings developed by Northern Offshore Services, an NYK Group company in Europe, to meet Japanese operating

VTC's Kastritsi



requirements. Domestic sourcing of aluminum and major equipment formed part of the construction program, reflecting the effort to establish a local supply chain for offshore wind support vessels.

In Northwest Europe, the growth of LNG-fueled shipping is creating demand for specialized bunker vessels capable of supplying ships at multiple ports.

United LNG I, developed for Belgian shipping company Somtrans, is an estuary-class LNG bunker barge measuring 135 meters long and 21.46 meters wide.

Its cargo system comprises eight cylindrical Type C tanks, each with a capacity of 1,000 cubic meters, designed to store liquefied natural gas at approximately minus 165 degrees Celsius.

The barge is configured for inland waterway operations and coastal voyages as far as Zeebrugge, extending the range of ports it can serve.

Construction involved several countries. The hull was built in China and transported to the Netherlands, where LNG tanks manufactured by Italy's Gas & Heat were installed in Rotterdam. TeamCo Shipyard subsequently completed outfitting under the overall project management of RensenDriessen.

Christened in Antwerp, the vessel was scheduled to enter service in early 2026. A sister vessel is also planned to expand Somtrans' LNG bunkering capacity.

Finally, Turkish shipbuilder **Sanmar delivered Kastritsi to Bulgarian operator VTC S.A.** for harbor towage operations at Varna on the Black Sea.

Based on Robert Allan's RApport 2500 design, the azimuth stern drive tug measures 25.2 meters long and 12 meters wide, with a maximum draft of 4.2 meters.

Its shallow-draft configuration supports operations in confined harbor waters, while ahead bollard pull exceeding 50 metric tons provides the power required for ship assistance.

The tug has a maximum speed of 12 knots, FiFi-1 firefighting capability and accommodation for six crew members. Kastritsi is the fifth vessel supplied by Sanmar to VTC since the companies began working together in 2003. It joins a fleet supporting berthing, unberthing, coastal towing and emergency response in the Bulgarian ports of Varna and Balchik.

2026 Boatbuilding Innovative

Vessel Name	Vessel Type	Owner
Acadia	Subsea Rock Installation Vessel	GLDD
Marauder	Escort / Ship-Assist Tug	Maritime Partners
Saturn	Escort Tug	Suderman & Young
Mary McAllister	Tractor / Escort Tug	McAllister Towing
John Paul Eckstein	10,000-hp Inland Linehaul Towboat	Marquette
Solomon Atkinson	Naval Towing, Salvage and Rescue Ship	U.S. Navy
Al Sloss	Inland Towboat	Canal Barge
CMA CGM Electra	Battery-Electric Inland Container Barge	CMA CGM
Spirit of Mulgumpin	High-Speed Passenger / Tour Vessel	The Tour Collective
Alfonsino Arrow	Offshore Wind Crew Transfer Vessel	NYK Group
United LNG I	LNG Bunker Barge	Somtrans
Kastritsi	Azimuth Stern Drive Harbor Tug	VTC





BUILT IN GRIFFIN, PROVEN ON THE RIVER

Caterpillar's C32B moves from a decade of engineering and a six-year ACBL field trial into commercial production for an inland waterways market where uptime remains the defining metric.

By Greg Trauthwein

Walking Caterpillar's manufacturing floor in Griffin, Georgia, provides some perspective on what sits behind a marine diesel engine long before it reaches a vessel's engine room. The Griffin operation is one piece of Caterpillar's broader marine manufacturing footprint. For marine applications, the facility produces the C32 and C18 lines, as well as the C12 and C9.3. Larger 3500, 3600 and C280 series engines are manufactured in Lafayette, Indiana, while other Caterpillar marine platforms are produced in the UK and at regional manufacturing operations around the world.

For the U.S. inland waterways market, however, Griffin is particularly relevant today because it is home to production of the C32B, Caterpillar's latest 32-liter commercial marine engine. The engine may share a name, dimensions and manufacturing line with its C32 predecessor, but internally it is a substantially different machine.

It also arrives in commercial production after a long proving period: six years aboard an American Commercial Barge Line (ACBL) towboat, where a pair of 1,000-hp C32Bs accumulated more than 33,000 operating hours without major work to the bottom end.

For Gary Sarrat Jr., Caterpillar Marine's Global Segment Team Leader for Inland Waterways and Commercial Fishing, the relevance of both the engine and the Griffin operation comes back to one word: uptime.

"The biggest challenge for any operator, inland waterway or really otherwise, is uptime," Sarrat said during *Marine News*' recent visit to the facility. "Uptime is where they make their money. Anytime a vessel is down for any reason, it's a loss of revenue and it's a loss of revenue that's not easily able to be recaptured later on."

Building Different Engines on the Same Line

One of the more interesting aspects of the Griffin operation is its manufacturing flexibility. A C32 and C32B can move through the same production line alongside one another despite significant differences inside the engines.

"There are different internal components for the C32B than the current C32," Sarrat said. "It's a different cylinder block, certainly different crankshafts, different connecting rods, different pistons."

But the manufacturing system is designed so the appropriate components arrive at each station for the individual engine being assembled.

"You could have a C32 next to a C32B in the production line and the components for each are ready to go," Sarrat said. "Those components for the internals are different, but they're able to be installed along the production line seamlessly."

That manufacturing simplicity belies the engineering work behind the engine. Sarrat estimates development of the C32B platform began roughly a decade ago. The first engines entered the ACBL field trial six years ago, even as Caterpillar continued developing additional ratings.

Every new product also passes through Caterpillar's New Product Introduction process. Kevin Lu, Strategy Consultant, Caterpillar Marine Reman & Services, said engineering teams make certain that tooling, torque requirements and assembly procedures are established before an engine moves into regular production.

The manufacturing process is heavily documented.

Caterpillar's Pinpoint system records torque data generated during assembly in the cloud. MESA provides standard work instructions to assemblers, including component installation and sequencing, while other systems feed manufacturing information into the engine's record.

"All these different systems talk to each other," Lu said. "It all goes up into one database and stores it for that particular engine. It's all date coded, everything's trackable, traceable. So we'll know exactly when that operator hit that trigger or torqued that bolt down."

That record becomes particularly useful if a problem surfaces years later, allowing Caterpillar to investigate whether its origin was in manufacturing or in the field.

C32B: Familiar Outside, Different Inside

Maintaining the C32's external envelope was important because inland vessels can remain in service for decades. Internally, however, Caterpillar made extensive changes.

The redesigned engine incorporates a new crankshaft with larger rod pins and mains, increased bearing surfaces and additional structural material in the block. Caterpillar also changed piston geometry, cylinder liners and rotating components. Cylinder head changes included revised water jacket passages, upgraded intake valve and seat materials, modified exhaust valve geometry and integrated fuel lines.

The C32B's origins are somewhat counterintuitive. Much of the engineering was initially driven by the yacht and pleasure craft markets, where the objective was extracting considerably more horsepower from the same basic displacement.

Caterpillar then applied that stronger architecture to commercial applications at substantially lower power density.

"When we take the advancements that we made on the C32B platform for pleasure craft and yacht to get as much as 2,400 horsepower out of one engine, and we take those internal engine advancements for power density and apply them to an application where we want more durability and less power density, where we get 1,000 horsepower or 1,200 horsepower out of that block, the engine block is much more well suited to deliver that power longer term and be more durable in the long run," Sarrat said.

That is the value proposition Caterpillar is pitching to inland operators: not technology for technology's sake, but more operating hours between major maintenance events.

The C32B is offered in 800-hp and 1,000-hp continuous-duty ratings, with the platform extending to a 1,200-hp continuous-duty rating, 1,300-hp B-rating and 1,450-hp intermittent-duty rating.

Six Years with ACBL

The most important part of the C32B development story happened outside Griffin. Caterpillar placed two 1,000-hp continuous-duty C32Bs aboard an ACBL towboat roughly six years ago. Instead of creating a special operating profile for the engines, the intent was to put them into normal revenue service.

"We wanted to put a pair of these new C32Bs in and basically field test them," Sarrat said. "ACBL operated the vessel as they normally would."

The engines were digitally connected, allowing Caterpillar to monitor operating data, maintenance records, oil and coolant samples and other performance information. Caterpillar and ACBL also coordinated inspections as operating hours accumulated.





Caterpillar's Pinpoint system records torque data generated during assembly in the cloud. *"All these different systems talk to each other. It all goes up into one database and stores it for that particular engine. It's all date coded, everything's trackable, traceable. So we'll know exactly when that operator hit that trigger or torqued that bolt down."*

– Kevin Lu, Strategy Consultant, Caterpillar Marine Reman & Services

Typically, Sarrat said, a field follow might run for 5,000 or 10,000 hours. But because the C32Bs had entered service well before commercial production began, Caterpillar saw an opportunity.

"If the idea is that the C32B is a new platform that's more durable and it's going to give customers longer life to overhaul, let's prove it on the water," Sarrat said. "Let's prove it in the exact application where the customers are demanding that durability."

Caterpillar ultimately pushed the engines well beyond 50% of the targeted overhaul interval.

The numbers are notable. Caterpillar's previous guidance for engines in this class would put major overhaul considerations at roughly 20,000 hours, depending on operating conditions. The ACBL C32Bs surpassed 33,000 hours.

"We haven't done anything with the bottom end in 33,000 hours," Sarrat said. "For us, that's fantastic."

The trial also allowed Caterpillar to focus on previous C32 concerns involving intake valve recession and cylinder head life in certain applications. Revised thermal passages, upgraded intake valve materials and redesigned exhaust valve geometry were monitored during the extended test.

For Sarrat, the commercial calculation is straightforward.

"If we can extend a customer's overhaul interval by as much as 50%, then that's more time on the water, more time pushing cargo for the customer, less time taking a vessel out of service for maintenance for those engines, and that just translates into more money."

Repower: The Inland Opportunity

That equation becomes even more relevant when viewed against the age and operating profile of the U.S. inland fleet.

Unlike oceangoing ships operating continuously in salt water, inland towboats can have exceptionally long structural lives. Sarrat said 40- and 50-year-old vessels remain common among major operators, with freshwater operation contributing to hull longevity. A vessel may go through three or four power plants during its lifetime.

That makes repowering central to Caterpillar's inland business.

The C32B was consequently designed to retain the C32's basic footprint and connection points. For an operator with a serviceable hull, replacing engines can make far more economic sense than replacing the vessel. Tier 3-compliant 1,000-hp C32Bs can be used under EPA replacement-label provisions in appropriate applications, while Tier 4 configurations with an airless SCR system provide another route for operators pursuing lower emissions.

"The biggest driver still is a repower opportunity," Sar-



"Uptime is where they make their money. Anytime a vessel is down for any reason, it's a loss of revenue and it's a loss of revenue that's not easily able to be recaptured later on."

– Gary Sarrat Jr., Caterpillar Marine's Global Segment Team Leader for Inland Waterways and Commercial Fishing

rat said. "Operators can get 40, 50 years or more out of a well-built steel hull."

Steel prices, shipyard availability and competition for yard capacity from government programs can all affect the newbuild-versus-repower decision. Inland engines can accumulate 4,000 to 6,000 hours annually, meaning an engine block can reach 60,000, 80,000 or even 100,000 hours while the vessel itself still has decades of useful life remaining.

That market reality is already translating into orders. Caterpillar opened the C32B order board for commercial production at the end of last year, and Sarrat said orders are arriving for both new construction and repower projects.

"We're seeing orders come in at a decent pace," he said. "We're happy with the results."

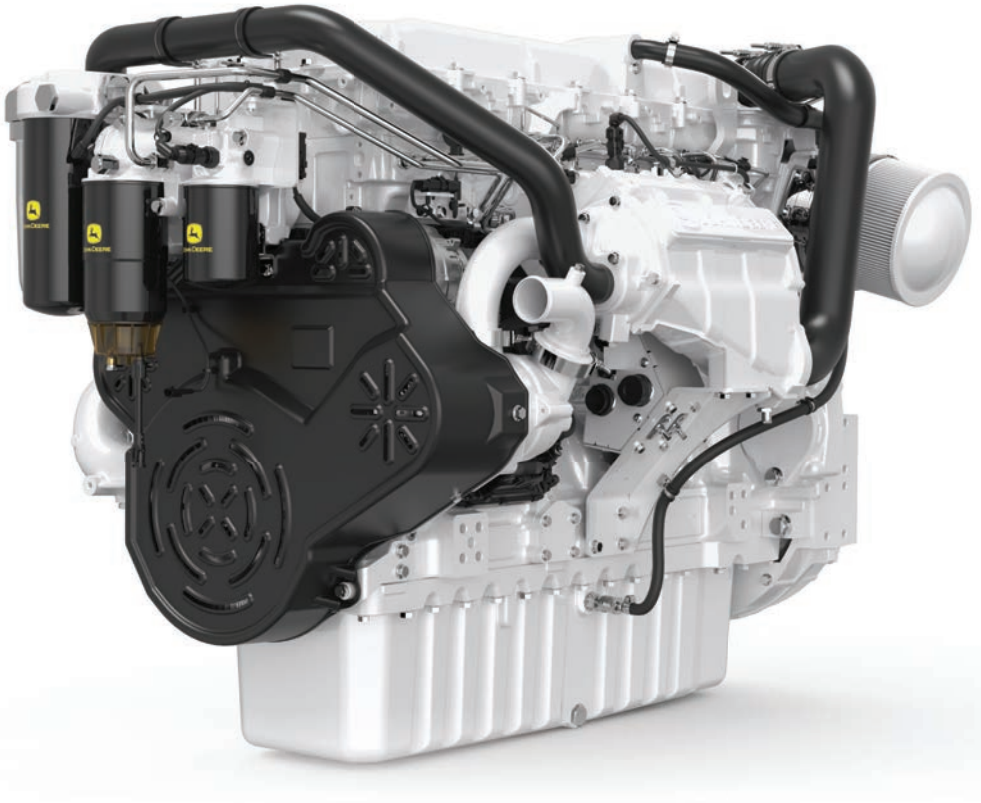
For Caterpillar, Griffin connects the two sides of that equation. It provides the manufacturing flexibility to put a substantially redesigned engine into production without forcing inland operators into an unfamiliar installation package. And six years of operation with ACBL provides the field evidence behind the engineering proposition.

On the inland waterways, where an engine's value is ultimately measured by how long it keeps a towboat moving cargo, those 33,000-plus hours may be the C32B's most important specification.









Proven on the Water:

Inside Field Testing of the New John Deere Marine Engines

By Vince Rodomista, John Deere Power Systems

From commercial tugs to passenger ferries, extensive field trials reveal how a high pressure common-rail fuel system, extended maintenance intervals, and remote connectivity are establishing a new standard for heavy-duty marine propulsion.

Whether pushing cargo along coastal waterways, navigating rough offshore fishing grounds, or keeping passenger ferry schedules running on time, commercial marine operations demand continuous, reliable power. To meet these real-world conditions, John Deere Power Systems engineered its new 13.6L JD14 marine engine, delivering 400 to 789 hp (298 to 588 kW), and 18.0L JD18 marine engine, delivering 550 to 789 hp (410 to 588 kW), from the ground up for heavy-duty commercial applications.

To evaluate engine performance in actual working conditions, John Deere conducted an extensive field trial program across a diverse fleet of commercial fishing vessels, tugs, passenger ferries, and high-speed passenger catamarans. Across 15 test engines, including eight JD14 engines and seven JD18 engines, deployed throughout North America and Europe, the trials accumulated thousands of operating hours under demanding conditions, helping validate performance across a broad spectrum of commercial marine applications.

High-Pressure Common-Rail Tech

Central to the design of the JD14 and JD18 is the adoption of a High-Pressure Common-Rail (HPCR) fuel system. By bringing advanced electronic control to fuel delivery rather than relying on traditional mechanical linkages, the HPCR system precisely manages fuel pressure, timing, and injection duration across all engine speeds.

This precise electronic management translates into operational benefits on the water. Optimized fuel burn under changing engine loads allows operators to meet certified NOx emissions standards without needing EGR or exhaust aftertreatment. This enables vessels to maintain optimized fuel efficiency during heavy towing, long transits, and continuous-duty work. The HPCR system also utilizes pilot injection, delivering small fuel bursts prior to main ignition to smooth out combustion and dampen engine vibration.

When paired with a rear gear train designed to minimize mechanical noise, this technology helps create a quieter engine room and improves crew and passenger comfort.

Feedback from the field trials consistently noted immediate throttle response under load along with noticeable noise reductions. On commercial passenger ferry routes, limited visible exhaust smoke and vibration helped provide a more comfortable experience for passengers using deck areas above the engine compartment.

While precise fuel management enhances performance on the water, maintaining demanding vessel schedules also depends on reducing dockside service stops.

Extended Intervals

To reduce maintenance downtime, the JD14 and JD18 marine engines feature low-maintenance design components aimed at extending fluid service intervals and streamlining routine mechanical servicing.

Increased fluid capacity and advanced filtration systems extend oil change service intervals up to 500 hours when using John Deere Plus-50™ II engine oil. Unlike traditional rubber seawater pump impellers that require frequent inspection and replacement, the rigid bronze seawater pump impeller is designed for up to 10,000 hours of operation before servicing. Both engines also feature Hydraulic Automatic Valve Lash Adjustment, which automatically maintains the proper clearance between valve train components as thermal expansion and normal wear occur during operation. By removing periodic manual valve lash adjustments from the scheduled maintenance requirements, this system simplifies engine servicing and helps maximize operational uptime over the engine's lifespan. The extended service intervals also streamline service labor and reduce maintenance expenses.

Beyond optimizing uptime and reducing maintenance costs, the next opportunity for commercial marine operators is gaining greater visibility into engine health through remote monitoring and diagnostic capabilities while vessels are underway.

Integrated Telematics and Connected Support

Telematics played a vital role during field testing, giving John Deere engineers near real-time visibility to trial vessel operating conditions, parameters, and engine health across domestic and international waters. In one instance, the telematics system flagged an early fuel pressure diagnostic code. Support teams on shore identified clogged fuel filters and alerted the crew to perform routine filter maintenance, keeping the engine running at peak performance. On passenger vessels, operators used John Deere Connected Support to establish custom speed thresholds

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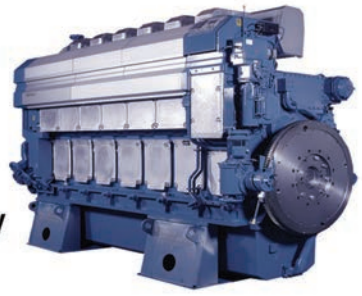
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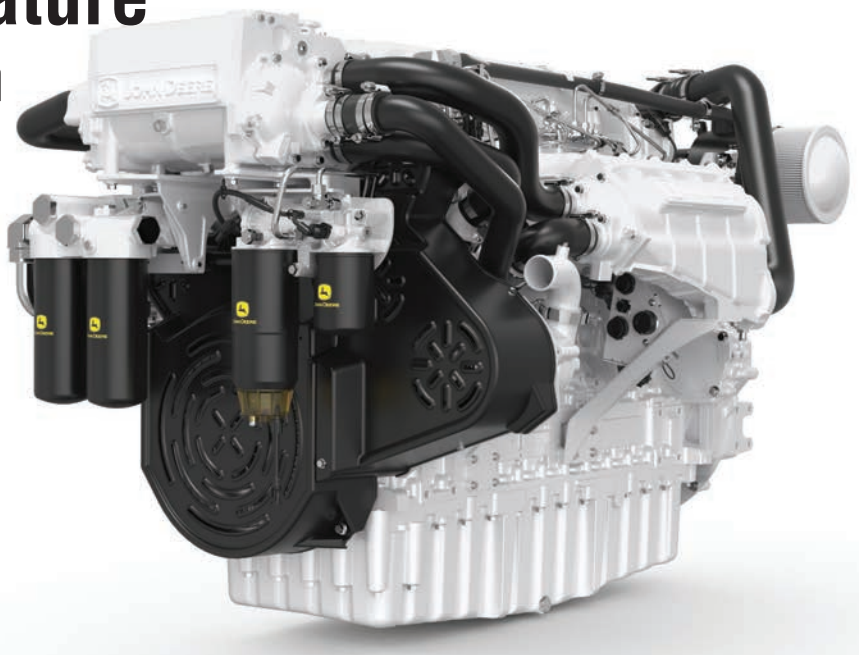
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and monitor parameters that optimized transit efficiency.

This level of connectivity comes standard on the JD14 and JD18 through integrated John Deere Connected Support hardware, providing continuous remote monitoring and diagnostic capabilities without subscription fees. With operator permission, John Deere Connected Support gives John Deere and authorized dealers and distributors access to near real-time engine health data and performance metrics, while allowing customers to control what information is shared — including the option to share engine data without sharing vessel location data.

Next Gen Propulsion

Putting the JD14 and JD18 through rigorous real-world testing validated the customer-focused design goals behind these engines: delivering reliable power, ensuring that power is usable in demanding heavy-duty applications, reducing noise and vibration, simplifying serviceability, and lowering scheduled maintenance costs. Feedback from field-trial operators confirmed that the JD14 and JD18 directly address the operational priorities of commercial marine operators, crews, and passengers.

For commercial marine operators balancing tight schedules, high utilization, and tough marine environments, the JD14 and JD18 integrate durable power, efficient operation, extended service intervals, reduced noise and vibration, and John Deere Connected Support technology into a modern propulsion platform engineered to maximize uptime, lower operating costs, and improve confidence and comfort for crews and passengers.





Image courtesy Regal Rexnord

Downtime, Delays, and their Effects Across Inland Waterways

The High Cost of Downtime on America's Inland Waterways

By Bob Lennon, Regal Rexnord

America's inland waterway systems are one of the nation's most valuable transportation resources, moving bulk commodities like grain, fertilizer, petroleum products, aggregates, chemicals, and other materials throughout the country. Spanning from stretches such as the Mississippi River to the Intercoastal Waterway, pushboats and towboats play a vital role in keeping these supply chains moving forward without fail.

For vessel operators in these environments, uptime is an necessity that cannot be compromised. Revenue is generated when vessels are moving cargo and not when they are tied up awaiting repairs. While equipment wear is inevitable, many costly downtime events can be shortened or avoided altogether with disciplined maintenance practices, proactive inspections, and a long-term approach to lifecycle management efforts.

And for inland operators, one of the most effective ways to protect uptime is not necessarily through major capital investments, but through supporting thoughtful maintenance planning and routine inspections of critical rotating equipment before small issues have a chance to grow into more significant failure points.

Why Downtime Matters on Inland Waterways

Inevitably, every marine operator will face challenges brought on by the natural equipment lifecycle, but inland waterway operators face these challenges with a unique set of operational pressures. Inland towboats function within a dense interconnected transportation network where schedules are influenced heavily by a range of external factors including river conditions, lock and dam availability, terminal operations, and seasonal commodity demand.

As a result, the impact of a vessel outage can extend far beyond the vessel itself. When a pushboat experiences an unexpected failure, the consequences can quickly trickle down throughout other areas of the supply chain. This can materialize through barge movements being delayed, loading and unloading schedules at terminals being affected, and deliveries getting postponed causing operators to struggle while attempting to adjust schedules and deploy available assets to fill in these gaps.

Additionally, the financial implications often reach well beyond the cost of the repair itself. Even when a vessel is out of service, operators typically continue to carry operating expenses in the form of labor, insurance, financing, and opera-

tional overhead. These unexpected breakdowns can also create additional costs associated with emergency repair work, expedited parts, overtime labor, and schedule disruptions.

In many of these cases, the most significant cost of equipment failure is the operational disruption that is caused when trying to rectify the damages, quickly becoming one of the most expensive things operators deal with when managing a fleet.

Turning Existing Maintenance Windows Into Uptime Opportunities

The silver lining for operators is that improving reliability does not necessarily require creating entirely new maintenance programs. In many cases, opportunities already exist within established maintenance windows.

Engine service intervals and other planned maintenance events create natural opportunities to inspect adjacent systems while equipment access is readily available. Incorporating these additional inspections during scheduled maintenance windows often requires minimal additional labor while allowing the potential to identify possible issues before they result in significant downtime.

Attention should be given to critical rotating equipment and drivetrain components, including couplings, shafting, bearings, mounting hardware, and fasteners as these components perform demanding work throughout the vessel's operating life and provide valuable indicators of emerging issues when knowing what to look for.

Visual inspections can reveal signs of excessive wear, corrosion, loosened hardware, or developing misalignment. Operators may also observe unusual vibration patterns, abnormal operating temperatures, or other subtle indicators that could warrant further investigation and attention.

Overall, the objective is not to create an overly complicated inspection process, but rather to establish an effective program built around consistency rather than complexity. Easily repeatable inspection procedures performed during maintenance activities often provide greater long-term value than infrequent and highly detailed reviews.



Image courtesy Regal Rexnord/Getty Images

Some of the most valuable maintenance activities happen while equipment is already offline. By inspecting couplings, shafting, bearings, and other rotating equipment during planned service intervals, operators can uncover potential concerns early and help avoid costly downtime down the line.

Managing the Realities of Brown-Water Operations

While many of these reliability principles apply throughout the marine industry as a whole, inland waterways present operating conditions that require particular attention.

Rivers often expose vessels to conditions that significantly differ from those experienced by other offshore or blue-water vessels. Floating debris, sediment, and varying water conditions can contribute to unique or increased wear on critical equipment and place additional stress on the rotating components.

Shallow-water operations also present additional challenges. Groundings and underwater strikes may not always create immediate or significant operational issues, but they can introduce hidden damage that continues to develop over time. Even relatively minor impacts have the potential to affect alignment, bearing condition, and overall drivetrain performance among other things.

Towboats also operate under duty cycles that differ from many ocean-going vessels due to frequent maneuvering and stop-start operations with high torque and pushing loads. Because of this, components are often exposed to varying loads and stresses that may require different types of inspection priorities than systems that operate at relatively steady conditions over long distances.

It's because of these realities that the best maintenance strategies should reflect the environment in which vessels operate. Inspection intervals and maintenance priorities should be informed by the conditions these vessels operate in rather than relying solely on standardized schedules.

Reliability Through Collaboration

When it comes to seeing these changes through, the responsibility is rarely on a single individual or organization. Reliability is often the result of collaboration among operators, maintenance teams, shipyards, service providers, and technical specialists working toward a common objective.

It's these partnerships that can help operators establish practical and meaningful inspection intervals that help interpret wear patterns and improve maintenance planning decisions. Shared operational knowledge often provides valuable insights into how equipment is performing under real world conditions and where improvements may be possible.

As operating environments become increasingly demanding and equipment lifecycles continue to be scrutinized for efficiency gains, collaboration across the marine ecosystem can play an important role in helping operators maximize asset utilization while minimizing unexpected disruptions.

A Steady Stream Forward

Downtime remains one of the most significant challenges facing inland marine operators. While repair costs are often the most visible consequence of equipment failure, the broader impacts on schedules, cargo movements, fleet utilization, and operating costs can be even more substantial.

Operators may not be able to control river levels, weather conditions, or market fluctuations, but they can influence equipment reliability through proactive maintenance practices and disciplined lifecycle management by integrating targeted inspections into existing maintenance routines and identifying potential issues before they lead to failure.

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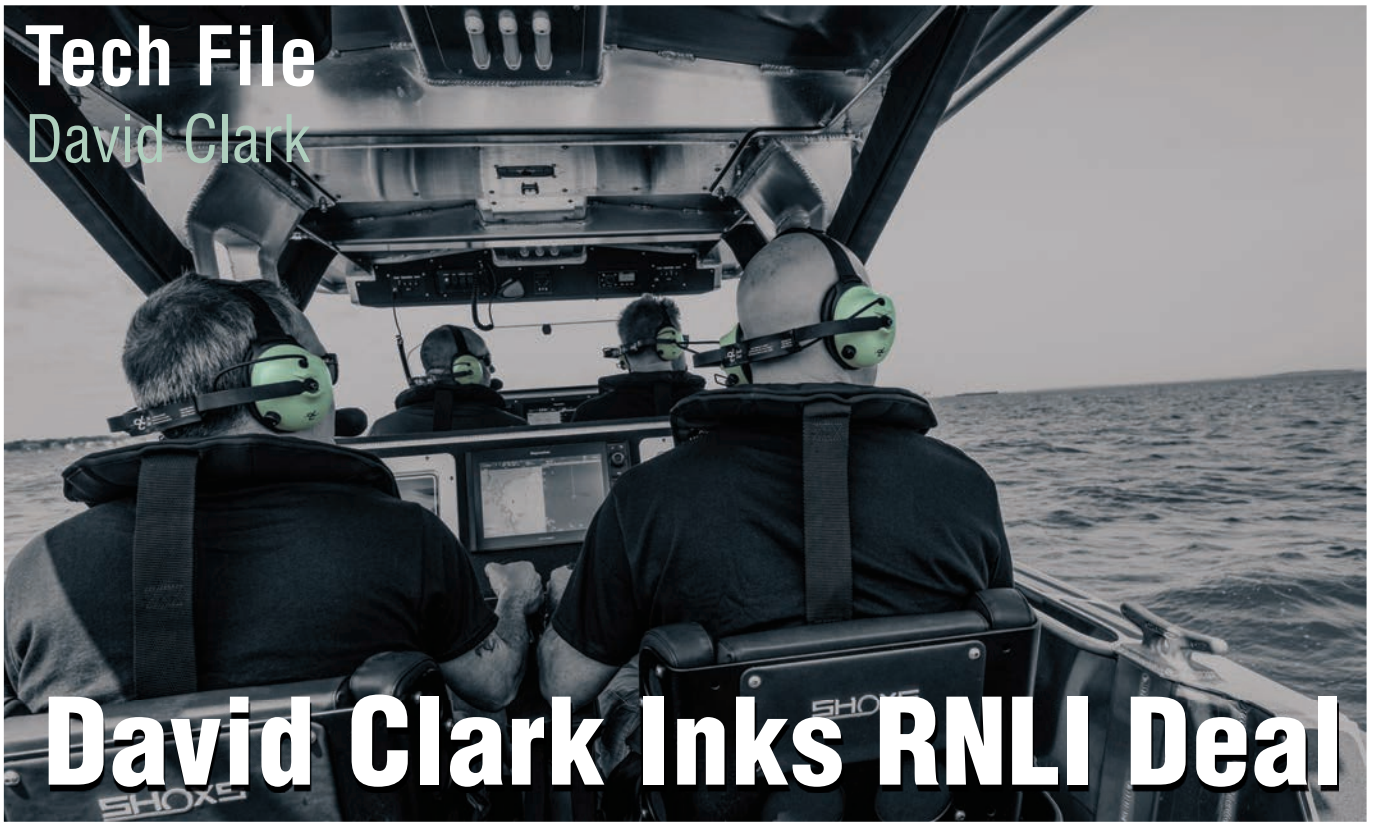
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Recognized by its iconic green headset domes, David Clark offers a number of communications solutions for the marine industry, including its long-standing 9100 series, which is used across myriad maritime applications. Da-vid Clark provides communication system products across multiple industries including marine, aviation, airport ground support, fire/rescue, and military, as well as suit engineering and manufacturing for high-altitude flight and aerospace. Crew communications on board workboats in harsh marine environments are subject to a variety of challenges. Background noise from loud engines, shock and vibration pounding through rough water, high wind noise and turbulence at speeds of 55-60 knots, and the highly corrosive nature of the marine environment - can render workboat crew communications all but impossible. Crew members are often reduced to shouting, creating situ-ations where critical communications pertaining to navigational and situational awareness may either be missed or misinterpreted. David Clark has nearly two decades of experience developing communication systems for the marine workboat market. The flagship system for the marine market is the Series 9100 Digital System is transforming the way workboats crews communicate. The system provides clear, hands-free communication for crew mem-bers on board high-speed patrol boats for military and law enforcement, fire/rescue craft, offshore service and transport vessels, tug and tow boats, as well as other workboats. System components include a Master Station, User Interfaces and noise-attenuating headsets working in concert to provide workboat crews with clear com-munication while enhancing situational awareness, crew safety and helping to ensure mission or operational success. Series 9100 Digital System is the scalable, versatile and simple way to communicate on the water.

The RNLI Deal

David Clark has recently been selected to provide their Series 9100 Digital Intercom Systems with wireless inter-face to RNLI (Royal National Lifeboat Institution), the largest volunteer-run maritime rescue and lifeboat charity of its kind in the world. Trialed and chosen against competitive offerings for its usability, reliability, and clarity of communications, RNLI is adopting the David Clark 9100 Series headset systems for the critical communication needs of their lifeboat crews, with installations planned across a wide selection of their fleet of over 450 life-boats.

JW Fishers: On Duty Underwater

JW Fishers Manufacturing designs and manufactures a range of professional underwater search and inspection equipment for public safety, military, commercial, scientific, and salvage applications. Its product portfolio includes side scan sonar systems, remotely operated vehicles (ROVs), underwater metal detectors, marine magnetometers, scanning sonar, cable and pipeline trackers, underwater video systems, acoustic pingers, and pinger receivers.

Flagship products include the SeaLion-3 ROV, a seven-thruster platform designed for search, inspection, and recovery operations; the Pulse 8X underwater metal detector, used by law enforcement, military, and commercial divers; and JW Fishers' sidescan sonar systems, engineered to search large areas and produce detailed images of submerged targets.

JW Fishers also provides specialized accessories and integrated search solutions that allow multiple technologies, including sonar, video, and metal detection, to work together. In addition to manufacturing, JW Fishers provides direct technical support, system configuration assistance, troubleshooting, repair services, and customer training.

The JW Fishers SeaLion-3 is a third-generation professional ROV engineered for underwater search, inspection, and recovery missions. Its seven-motor vectored propulsion system provides maneuverability and control. The SeaLion-3 allows operators to locate, inspect, identify, and document underwater targets while reducing diver exposure. Optional payloads like a scanning sonar enable operation in zero visibility, and the RMD-1 metal detector can locate weapons, pipelines, vehicles, UXO, and other metallic targets

JW Fishers' facility supports mechanical and electronic assembly, system integration, engineering and product development, quality control, pressure testing, troubleshooting, repair, and final system testing. Specialized testing procedures help ensure equipment is ready for the demanding environments encountered by public safety, military, commercial diving, salvage, and marine survey customers.



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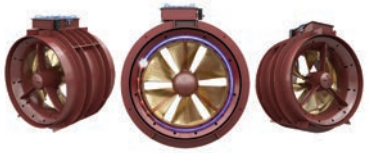
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The heavy-duty HPW series of waterlocks from VETUS can handle extreme conditions above 500 °F. A cost-effective option, these waterlocks feature rotating bodies and hose connections, a high-capacity water lift design, and excellent sound attenuation.

https://vetus.com/usa/exhaust-systems

2. SPJ-S Thruster

With the SCHOTTEL PumpJet Submersible SPJ-S, SCHOTTEL expands its portfolio with a submersible auxiliary thruster designed for manned and unmanned underwater vehicles. The SPJ-S has been developed for civil and military subsurface applications. The SPJ-S is based on the SCHOTTEL PumpJet principle and features a specially designed pressure compensation system. By equalizing the hydrostatic pressure at the seals, the system enables reliable deepwater applications. The generated thrust can be continuously adjusted through 360 degrees, providing the underwater platform with maximum maneuverability.

The SPJ-S is mounted flush with the hull, ensuring that hydrodynamic resistance remains unchanged. At the same time, the design reduces the risk of damage in the event of seabed contact in shallow or challenging waters. Moreover, its robust construction enables controlled bottoming on the seabed, further expanding operational capabilities. Thanks to its compact installation within the outer hull, the SPJ-S can be integrated into a wide range of platforms, from Extra Large Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (XLUUVs) to submarines.

3. AutoHook

Fairbanks Morse Defense (FMD) unveiled AutoHook, an autonomous vessel recovery interface developed by its Norway-based business Vestdavit, designed to recover uncrewed surface vessels (USVs) and other craft without manual connections. The system is designed to automate the active recovery phase of launch and recovery operations, with FMD reporting that it has achieved operational acceptance at Sea State 4. AutoHook uses onboard vision technology and integrated thrusters to track and secure moving vessels during recovery, eliminating the need for crew intervention during the capture process. The compact unit clamps onto an existing davit wire and integrates its thrusters, control systems, vision technology and power supply into a single assembly, without requiring modifications to winches or davits.

4. Tunnel Thruster

Kongsberg Maritime expanded its Rim-Drive Tunnel Thruster (RD-TT) range with the introduction of two new larger models, featuring propeller diameters of 2300 mm and 2600 mm. The RD-TT 2300 and RD-TT 2600 models extend the upper end of the existing product range, enabling operators to specify Rim-Drive technology for larger vessels and applications which require greater thrust and enhanced station-keeping capability. The thrusters are rated at 2100 kW and 2700 kW respectively.

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1. Publication Title	2. Publication Number	3. Filing Date
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15. Extent and Nature of Circulation — Requester	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
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b. Total Requested and Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a) ▶	10231	9889
c. Total Requested Copy Distribution (Line 15f) + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a) ▶	10571	10004
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17. Publication of Statement of Ownership for a Requester Publication is required and will be printed in the November 2026 issue of this publication.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: Kathleen Hickey — Date: 9/18/2026

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2027 Editorial Calendar

Marine News

January / February 2027
Ad close: February 1, 2027

MARTIME PROPULSION

E-Magazine Edition

- Battery Electric Hybrids
- Passenger Ferry Design & Construction
- Coatings & Corrosion Control
- **Special Supplement - *Autonomous Vessels: A U.S. Ship & Boatbuilding Revolution***

Conference & Exhibition Partners

- **PVA Maritrends** – January 21-24, Tampa, FL
- **CMA Shipping** – March 16-18, Houston, TX

March / April 2027
Ad close: April 1, 2027

TUGBOAT, TOWBOAT, BARGE

E-Magazine Edition

- Maintenance: Calendar-based vs. Condition-based
- Offshore Energy
- Marine Cordage
- **Special Edition: *PORT OF THE FUTURE Magazine Supplement***

Conference & Exhibition Partners

- **Port of the Future** – April 12-14, League City, TX
- **IMX** – May 11-13, Nashville, TN
- **OTC** – May 3-5, Houston, Texas
- **Sea-Air-Space** – April 4-7, National Harbor, MD
- **Seatrade Cruise Global** – April 5-8, Miami Beach, FL
- **IPF** – Tech at Sea, April 11-14, Newport, RI
- **XPONENTIAL** – May 17-20, Miami Beach, FL

May / June 2027
Ad close: June 1, 2027

DREDGING

E-Magazine Edition

- Marine Salvage
- Maritime Safety Equipment
- Waterjets, Thrusters & Propellers
- **Special Supplement - *Autonomous Vessels: Port & Harbor Security***

Conference & Exhibition Partners

- **WEDA**
- **AGLPA**

July / August 2027
Ad close: August 1, 2027

BOATBUILDING

E-Magazine Edition

- Boat Repair & Conversion
- Fuels & Lubes
- Shipyard Tools - Cutting & Welding
- **Special Supplement - *Autonomous Vessels: U.S. Navy & USCG***

Conference & Exhibition Partners

- **Breakbulk Americas** – Houston, TX

September / October 2027
Ad close: October 1, 2027

MARITIME TRAINING & EDUCATION

E-Magazine Edition

- Thought Leadership: U.S. Maritime Academies
- Maritime Training Facilities
- Distance Learning Systems
- **Special Supplement - *Autonomous Vessel Design***

Conference & Exhibition Partners

- **SNAME**
- **Interferry**

November / December 2027
Ad close: November 15, 2027

GREAT BOATS of 2027

Print + E-Magazine Edition

Review and report on the most significant boats delivered in 2027.

- Diesel Engines
- Deck Machinery, Winches, Cranes
- Marine Gears & Transmissions
- **Special Supplement - *Autonomous Vessels: Best Boats of 2027***

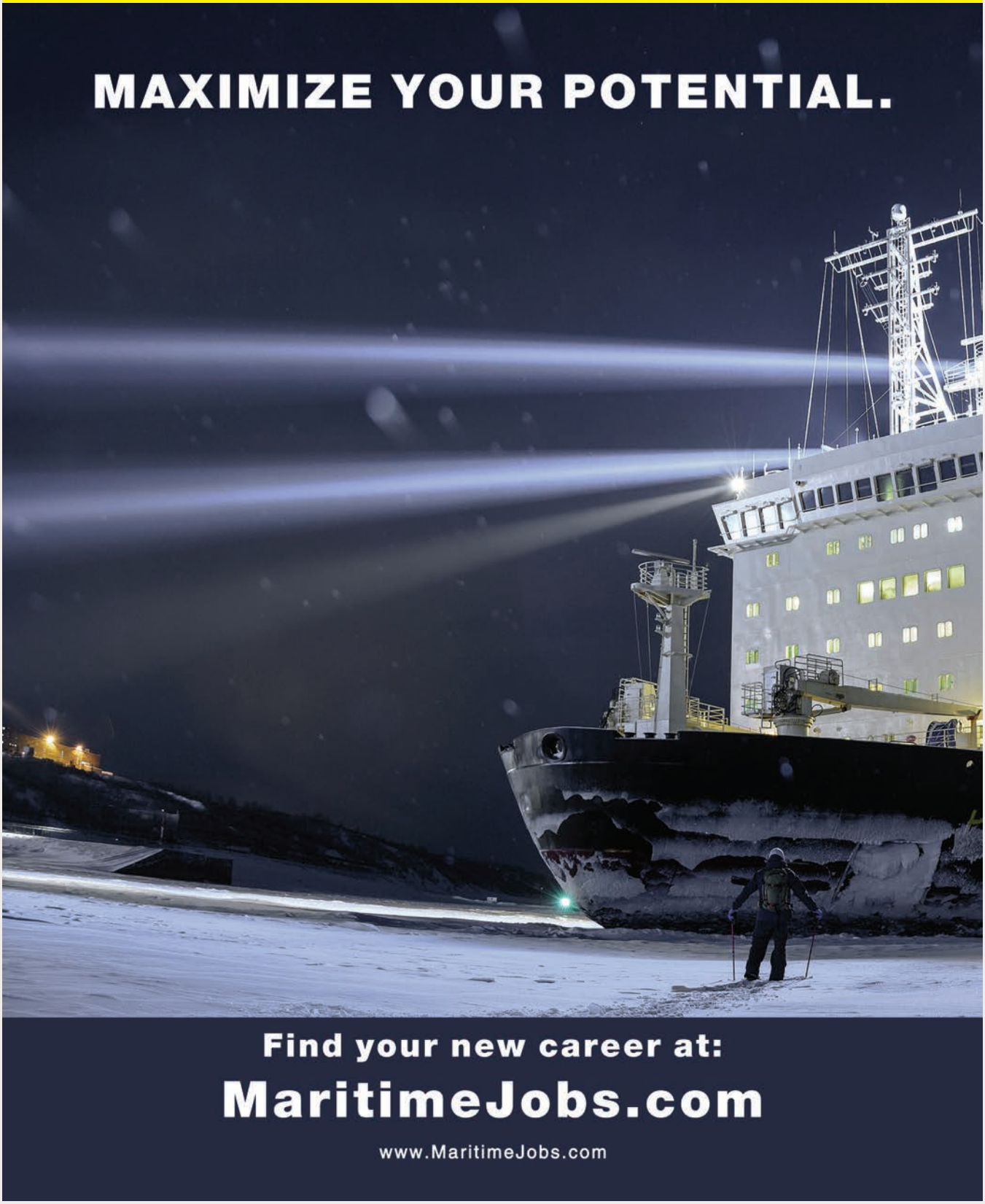
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- **Intl. Workboat Show** – New Orleans, LA
- **Underwater Intervention** – New Orleans, LA

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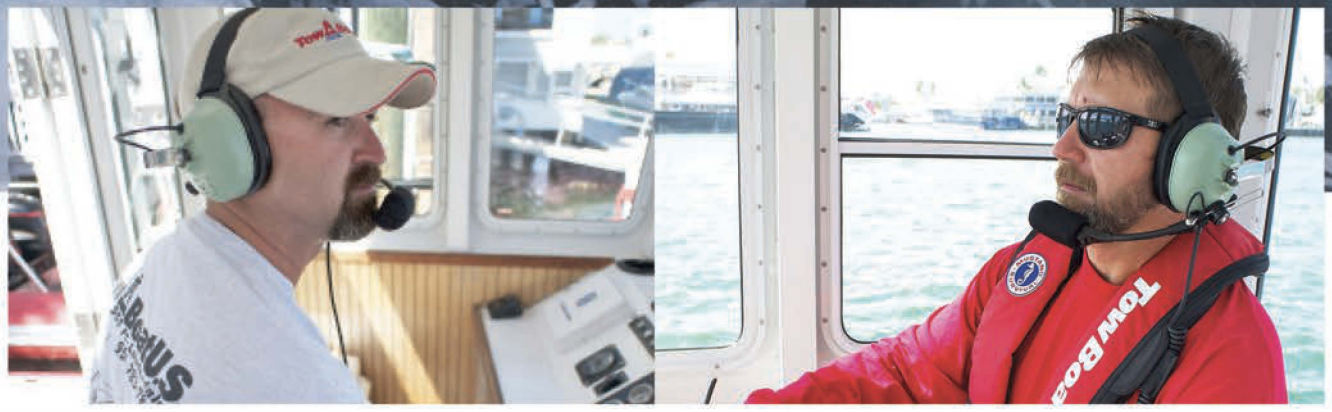
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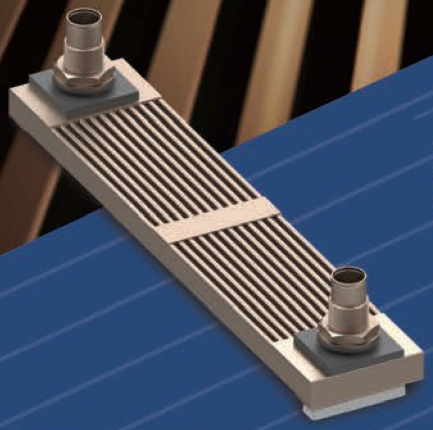
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